Lafayette Historical Society **NEWS**

Enlightening Our Community

Lafayette, California | January 2014 | Vol. 42, No. 1

Please join us for Lafayette Historical Society's First Speaker Series Presentation of 2014!

Lafayette Historical Society's *Speaker Series*

Camp Park Main Gate

"Lost History: What Do You Mean There Were Three Navy Bases in Dublin?"

Speaker....Steven Minniear, Vice President, Dublin Historical Preservation Association

Date.....Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Time.....2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Place.....Lafayette Library & Learning Center – Community Hall

Donation Requested–**$10.00** LHS members; **$15.00** non-members requested

Kids under 14 Free with paying adult

For questions or reservations please call (925) 283-1848 or email Lafayette.History@comcast.net

South Theater Blood Drive

Come listen to **Steve Minniear** speak about sailors, Seabees, and the stories behind all those old buildings you used to see in and around the Interstate 580/680 intersection.

Between 1942 and 1946 over 300,000 sailors lived, worked, trained, and transited through what is now Dublin, California. Camp Parks, Camp Shoemaker and Shoemaker Naval Hospital played an important, but largely lost, role in the US victory in the Pacific during World War II.

Camp Parks Main Gate 1945

Steve Minniear is a resident of Dublin. Soon after he moved to the area over twenty years ago he began to hear vague stories about how there once were Navy bases all along the route he drove to work in Livermore. Meeting a local volunteer who ran a small museum at Camp Parks, he became fascinated with learning more. When the small museum closed down in 2010, he dedicated his free time to collecting, saving and promoting the history that was becoming lost. His book, *Dublin and the Tri-Valley: The World War II Years*, issued by Arcadia Publishing, is coming out in February 2014.

A recent retiree, Minniear worked in national security. He graduated from

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President's Message

As we gaze at 2013 in a rearview mirror, we look forward to an exciting New Year in 2014.

As you may recall, we experimented with the days and times of our Speaker Series events last year. Each of the programs was very successful, and different folks were able to make each of the talks, so we were not able to come up with a definite conclusion as to which of the days or times is more popular. We'll continue with variations of times and themes and hope that you are able to join us at one or more of our events in 2014!

Our first Speaker Series of 2014 will be next month. It will be a very interesting talk about the Navy Bases in Dublin during World War II. We met Steven Minniear at a meeting of local Historical Societies and Museums. LHS recently began participating in the periodic meetings of the Contra Costa County Curators. Through these networking opportunities we are now able to collaborate with other local Historical Societies and Museums to share resources and ideas.

As usual January is the time when we ask you (members & non-members) to consider supporting the Lafayette Historical Society by renewing your membership or joining the Society.

I doubt that many of you reading this newsletter know that the Lafayette Historical Society pays rent to the City of Lafayette for our History Room. We also pay to rent the Community Hall for our Speakers Series events and our Annual Meeting & Potluck in May. We are dependent upon **individual donors like you** to support our efforts. We are fortunate to have annual pledges made by a small number of supporters as well as the donations made by attendees of our events. Mechanics Bank has graciously helped us with annual sponsorships.

Will you please consider joining the supporters of LHS by participating as a member for 2014 or renewing your current membership? A tax-deductible gift of $25 for an individual membership, or $50 for a family membership will help us maintain our presence. A membership application is included with our newsletter.

We truly appreciate your interest in the Lafayette Historical Society and your support.

- Mary McCosker

Speaker Series: Steve Minniear

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Georgetown University and the University of California, Berkeley where he first learned his passion for history.

Steve is Vice President of the Dublin Historical Preservation Association and acts as a docent at the Dublin Heritage Park & Museums. He also presents history lectures for local audiences and assists in the care of Dublin's Camp Parks collection. He is a member of the City of Dublin Heritage and Cultural Arts Commission.

He hopes that this presentation will bring back to life a forgotten part of the Tri-Valley's history and act as homage to the many men and women of the Greatest Generation that lived, worked, and sometimes died in the bases near Dublin, Pleasanton, Livermore and San Ramon. He also hopes to spark additional interest in Dublin and the area's history. He expects to dispel the sometimes heard remark that nothing interesting ever happened in Dublin.

Eagle Scout Creates Lafayette Historical Walking Tour iPhone App

Acalanes High School junior Marc Davis, a member of Troop 204 of Lafayette, recently completed a unique Eagle Project. Recalling his memorable docent-led walking tour of Lafayette in third grade, a rite of passage for all Lafayette third graders, Marc decided to make that experience available to all residents of Lafayette through his passion for iPhone App programming.

Marc Davis

With the Lafayette Historical Society on board, Marc and his cadre of scouts and other youth were treated to a docent led tour on which they took photos, marked GPS coordinates, and recorded verbal information for the App. They also researched and collected old photos from the Historical Society to include in the final product. Marc took all of this data, did his iPhone App programming magic and released "Lafayette Historical Walking Tour", available for free in the Apple App store on iPad, iPhone, and iTouch.

The App presents the user with a map showing historically significant locations in downtown Lafayette. The user can put the App into "auto" mode and as he approaches an historical site, the audio tour will automatically begin, triggered by GPS location. Old and new photos are overlaid with the ability to slide back and forth between them to gain an understanding of how the site has changed over the years.

Mary McCosker is excited about the App and has already introduced it to all third grade teachers in the Lafayette School District who have previewed their docent led field trip by utilizing Marc's App on their school iPads. It is Marc's hope to get the word out so that all citizens of Lafayette can learn about the history of our town. But just maybe others, farther afield, will get to know us as well… some of the first downloads of the App were from China and Poland!

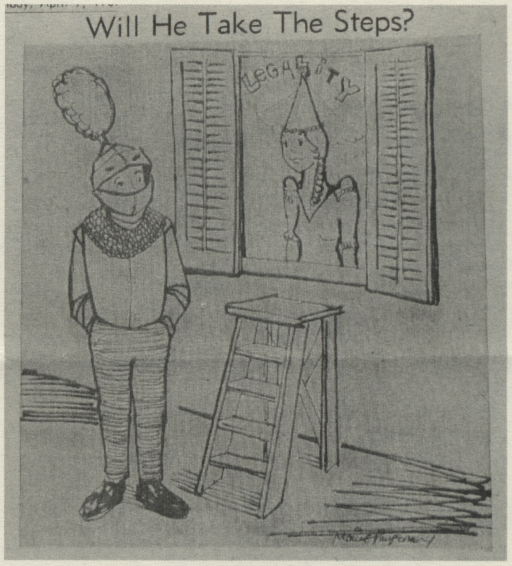
We are also including Marc's QR code to easily access the App.

The Dark Knights

by Kyra Mitchell

1967 was a noted year of rebellion amongst Lamorinda teens, but really, what year isn't? Usual troubles regarded boys growing their hair long and girls requesting later curfews. In most respects, there are not many differences between teens of the 60s and teens today.

Common high school and college misdemeanors included (and still include) vandalizing property, stealing 38 loaves of bread from the local market (an actual 1967 incident), and drinking alcohol underage for no other reason than boredom. Drugs such as LSD and Marijuana trickled in from the Berkeley and Oakland area, attracting youth to further rebel due to the lack of wholesome activities in which to partake. Apparently, one Friday night dance was enough.



Knights Cartoon

Teens in the surrounding area banded together and created an article in the local newspaper called "Teen Think." The article was in efforts to communicate anonymously with parents. Their hope was to solve the ever-lasting misunderstanding between adults and youths. Alongside the usual uprisings in young persons, a particular group of high school boys became notorious in the Lamorinda area.

The Knights were known to somewhat "terrorize" their local towns. Just like the black-jacket greasers in "Grease" starring John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John, The Knights were infamous for causing a ruckus in the local pizza joint and bravely picking fights with Saint Mary's College students.

A comical instance includes a poor Saint Mary's freshman boy who saw The Knights at the local pizza joint. He joined in on their rally and sadly "thought he was a part of the gang." Boy, was he wrong. And anyway, what college student wants to fraternize with high-schoolers? That was so last year.

To this day the names of participants in The Knights remain unknown. Even their origin is uncertain. They may have begun at Campolindo or Acalanes, though Miramonte is the most suspected. While the gang's participants were unknown to authority figures in 1967, students in neighboring high schools most likely knew at least one member of the group.

During the summer of 1967 The Knights seemed to have disappeared. School was no longer in session and there weren't any college students around to heckle. During these warm months The Knights had become a club as opposed to a gang. Sponsored by the Orinda Lions Club, the same name was enforced to dissuade recklessness and encourage wholesome behavior. Seriously though, what gang wants to be associated with a sensible club?

Efforts were in vain. Come September 1st of the new school year, the local pharmacy and neighboring Wells Fargo bank were vandalized. "Orinda, Home of The Knights" in large black lettering covered the buildings. The Knights

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Do These Trees Look Familiar?

Long time resident, Sue Cross brought this interesting bit of Lafayette history to our attention!

Post Office Trees Today

In 1978 the temporary Lafayette Post Office was located in a trailer while the new (and current) Post Office building was under construction. In order to soften the look of the trailer four large pots with little trees were placed by the walkway.

When the new Post Office was completed those trees were moved and still live happily in Lafayette. Do you know where? And do you know what kind of trees they are?

Send us a note at Lafayette.history@comcast.net or give us a call (925) 283-1848.

2013-2014 Board of Directors

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Temporary Post Office 1978

The Dark Knights

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had not completely diminished. Vandalism throughout the area continued less than a week later and the culprits were never discovered. Could it have been the group of boys acting out? We may never know.

The Lafayette Youth Center (LYC), a simple idea created shortly after The Knights began, posted jobs for teens in order to keep them out of trouble. The Knights remained quiet, staying under wraps. Nonetheless, just three months later, they struck again. Two Saint Mary's students had been beaten up on December 1st.

The LYC had a launching just two weeks later, officiating itself with hope to end all the reckless behavior. Whether or not The Knights decided it was time to retire or continued to lay low, they were not mentioned in the Lafayette Sun for the remainder of 1967, as far as records show.

Lafayette Historical Society
P.O. Box 133
Lafayette, CA 94549
www.LafayetteHistory.org

Return Service Requested

Lafayette Historical Society Membership Application

(Please photocopy form for additional names)

Name: _____

Spouse: _____

Address: _____

City-Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Membership Categories and Annual Dues

(Please check one)

- ❑ Student Membership $10.00
- ❑ Individual Membership $25.00
- ❑ Family Membership $50.00
- ❑ Sponsor Membership $500.00

Please indicate areas of special interest

- ❑ Publicity
- ❑ Research-Genealogy
- ❑ Telephoning
- ❑ Displays
- ❑ Oral Histories
- ❑ History Room
- ❑ Data Base Entry of Photos
- ❑ Photo Collection
- ❑ News Clippings
- ❑ Fire Engine
- ❑ Walking Tours-Outreach
- ❑ Other_____

Please mail this application to:

Lafayette Historical Society
P.O. Box 133
Lafayette, CA 94549